

BOOK REVIEWS

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CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY—Basic Principles in Therapeutics—Second Edition—Edited by Kenneth L. Melmon, MD, Professor of Medicine and Pharmacology, and Chief, Division of Clinical Pharmacology; and Howard F. Morrell, MD, Professor of Medicine and Pharmacology, and Vice Chairman (House Staff Affairs), Department of Medicine; University of California, San Francisco. Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 866 Third Avenue, New York City (10022), 1978, 1,146 pages, \$25.00 (cloth); \$19.95 (paperback).

This second edition of a textbook that seems destined to become a standard reference work testifies to the advantages of hindsight and "Phase IV" reevaluation, even in textbooks *about* drugs. The unit dealing with basic principles has been enlarged to include chapters on pharmacokinetics, psychologic factors, and the use of drugs in pregnancy and young children. Other important additions include chapters on alcohol and drug abuse as well as the treatment of poisoning. As a result of an apparent shift of emphasis from textbook to reference source, the case studies that constituted a separate unit in the first edition have been deleted.

Like all textbooks covering areas of great growth in new knowledge, *Clinical Pharmacology* has some obvious omissions, such as no mention of phencyclidine ("angel dust") among the drugs of abuse. Other topics are not discussed or cross-referenced in appropriate sections. For example, the use of demeclocycline in the treatment of inappropriate secretion of antidiuretic hormone (ADH) is given brief mention in the section on renal drugs but is not included in the section on ADH.

Considered as a whole, however, this textbook fills an important need of modern medicine, in providing a ready source of authoritative commentary on the clinical use of drugs.

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REVIEW OF MEDICAL PHARMACOLOGY—Sixth Edition—Friedrick H. Meyers, MD, Professor of Pharmacology; Ernest Jawetz, MD, PhD, Professor of Microbiology and Medicine, and Alan Goldfien, MD, Professor of Medicine, Departments of Medicine and Obstetrics and Cardiovascular Research Institute, School of Medicine, University of California, San Francisco. Lange Medical Publications, Drawer L, Los Altos, CA (94022), 1978. 762 pages, \$14.50.

This biennial edition is intended to be an up-to-date guide for pharmacology and therapeutics for both students and practitioners. It is well organized. The strongest sections are those on general principles, classic drugs, scientific approach to drug investigation, cancer chemotherapy, chemotherapeutic agents, mechanisms of action of antimicrobials (particularly inclusion of autolysins as one of the mechanisms of penicillin action), combination antimicrobial therapy and prophylactic therapy. Mechanisms are generally explained well and illustrated well. The charts, tables and structural formulas are very useful. The section on drug abuse is good perspective but appears sometimes to be historical in this rapidly changing area. The vasculitis syndrome seen with methamphetamines or methylphenidate with hepatitis B should be added.

Generally the perspective on new drugs or uses is cautious. Thus the section on propranolol is excellent but the widely used dopamine deserves more space. The combination of thiazide therapy with prazosin is mentioned but the rather common use with furosemide is omitted. Reduction of after load by sodium nitroprusside is given short shrift considering the wide clinical acceptance; the same is true for the long-acting nitrates. Most clinicians would favor nitroprusside for immediate relief of life-threatening hypertension rather than the cited diazoxide.

The introduction of serum assays as adjuncts in monitoring aminophylline and digoxin toxicity appears to have had little effect. Few clinicians would agree with the implication that digitalis leaf could be the preparation of choice if one became familiar with it.

The chemotherapy section is generally current except for the following: vancomycin has wide applicability in dialysis patients and in patients with methicillin-resistant staphylococcal infections. Likewise the current preparation of vancomycin is less toxic than indicated and probably is free of nephrotoxicity. Kanamycin listed on Table 48-1 would have little applicability for therapy against cited organisms in centers other than certain pediatric units; amikacin seems to have been given less attention than deserved and a more appropriate reference source would be *American Journal of Medicine* 62: June 1977. The polymyxins are not "becoming more important" despite *in vitro* test results; they are only rarely used and are generally ineffective in serious infections.

Although emphasis has been placed on square meters for establishing proper doses and the need to monitor renal function and assays of drugs, a guideline for estimated creatinine clearances should be included for the aminoglycosides. Atypical mycobacteria cannot be lumped together for comments on therapy. The cefazolin dosages advocated (0.5 to 1.0 grams every four hours) are high except for the most serious infections. The widely used carbenicillin needs to have hypokalemic alkalosis stressed as a side effect. Cefamandole is a cephalosporin and not a cephamycin as stated. Legionnaires' disease should be added as an indication for erythromycin therapy. The recommendations by others for initial combined therapy for suspected *Haemophilus influenzae* meningitis with ampicillin and chloramphenicol has been omitted. Use of hepatitis B immune globulin deserves more discussion. Only some of these are related to recent developments.

In general, the sources and references are appropriate. The cautious approach of the authors makes this book suitable for students preparing for board examinations but the clinician will need other sources for guidelines in current therapeutics.

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